Quick Judgements

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Quick Judgements

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Summary

The Alpha glanced down at where Will's hand rested, his face pinched. "Hannibal Lecter," he said.

"What?"

"My name. You'll need it for the paperwork."

Will blinked at him. "It sounds like a supervillain name," he said.

Will and Hannibal don't know each other. Not yet, anyway. But they already share a life.

Notes

A request from a lovely friend, who asked for an ABO story in which our boys fell in love retrospectively... post pregnancy. There is no dub/non-con in this at all, they were both consensually enjoying each other while drunk. There's no abuse/dub-con in the story either, just the two of them being ratty teenagers (18 and 19)

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

Will rested his chin on his knees and stared into the middle distance. He was vaguely aware that the tap he'd turned on to wash his hands was still running, that the reason he'd washed his hands in the first place was lying a few feet away from him on the floor. The rest was a buzzing in his head, like an angry swarm of mosquitoes, or killer wasps.

Pregnant.

He was *pregnant* .

His hands clutched at his legs tighter, fingers paling with the pressure.

It must have been the party, the one held at one of the frat houses on campus that Will had gone to first week of college. It must have been then, coz he'd never had sex before that.

But goddammit. Had the condom broken? Had they even *used* a condom? Will could barely remember what the guy he'd tumbled into bed had looked like, let alone his *name.* He'd been a tall Alpha, just a year above Will. He wasn't in any of Will's classes, Will had only seen him that night for the first and last time, and something about him had just…

Will slid his eyes to the pregnancy test again, the little '+' symbol damn near glaring at him.

He couldn't be pregnant.

He was eighteen and starting the life he'd always wanted and now…

He had to tell his dad.

Shit, he has to find the Alpha who'd done this to him and tell *him.* And then decide if he should go to the nurse to get this… taken care of. He couldn't keep it. He was too young, still a kid himself, fresh and green as anything and now…

He couldn't keep it.

Will pushed himself to stand and turned off the water. He needed to find out who the Alpha at the party had been. He'd start with that.

The problem was, Will didn’t have much to go on. He hadn’t asked the Alpha’s name-- he had distinct and humiliating memories of sobbing out ‘Alpha *please* ’ into a pillow. The next morning, Will had slipped out before the man woke up, and he’d been half buried under the blankets, only a tuft of mussed blond hair peeking out.

Lots of men were blond. Will had half a dozen blonds in his biology class alone. But none of them were the right one. He didn’t know how he knew, with how little he remembered, but he did. They didn’t *feel* right.

In the end Will found the Alpha entirely by accident.

He'd been getting desperate. There was only so much time before the situation would be unavoidable. Before he'd begin to show and people would *know* . Before he had to tell his *dad* .

Will found himself practically living in the library. Everyone went to the library, right? Everyone needed a book once in a while.

And there, tucked into a corner, not-reading a pile of books… Will *smelled* him.

He was blonde, that much Will had properly remembered. What he hadn't remembered was just how handsome the Alpha had been. Chiseled features, severe eyes, he comported himself like royalty and Will found himself for several moments entirely entranced by his elegant fingers as he turned the page of the book he was perusing.

"Hi," Will managed eventually, lifting his eyes when he felt the Alpha lift his. God he smelled so nice. "Do you remember me?"

The Alpha blinked, a slow thing, feline, and tilted his head. He took a slight breath in, assessing Will's smell against the myriad of others in his memory.

"Should I?" Came the eventual answer. He had an accent, and Will suddenly remembered that, too, the way he'd been told to *'hold still'* and *'be good, Omega'* as Will had whined and arched his back like he was getting paid for it.

Maybe it was better that he didn't remember.

Will swallowed. "We uh, the party. First week here, we umm. We hooked up?"

The Alpha blinked, and then closed his book. He gave Will a tight, polite smile.

"I'm sure you're a wonderful person," he said, every word stabbing deep at Will's mortification, "but I'm very busy with my studies. I don't really have the time to date."

Will could feel a red flush creeping up over his face. Snobby, stuck up-- "That's nice," he growled, "I don't want to date you either."

The Alpha's brow furrowed. "Then how can I help you?"

"I'm pregnant."

The Alpha froze, his hands stilling where they'd been fidgeting with his pen. He stared at Will, then took in another deep breath, as though checking Will's scent. "There've been quite a few parties since then," he said slowly, "are you sure it's mine?"

Will's mouth dropped open in shock. Were people really this--

"Are you *serious?"*

"It's a perfectly legitimate question," the other shrugged. "You threw yourself at me that night with such hunger, I wondered if you were entering your heat early."

Will was livid. Fuck this guy. Well, he *had,* and now… now. God, what now? He'd done his lawful duty by informing the other party of the pregnancy but they weren't mated, or bonded, he had no control over what Will did with the pregnancy going forward.

And if this was what he was like all the time then maybe it was worth--

"Yeah, it's fucking yours," Will hissed after a while. "Because you're the first and only person I've ever fucking slept with. The last, too, if you're all this rude,"

The Alpha settled a baleful stare on Will that seemed to look through him rather than at him. For several moments, they were silent, the quiet humming around them in the most uncomfortable way. Then the Alpha spoke up.

"Are you going to keep it?"

"Yes." The word was out of Will's mouth before he could consider, and the spiteful side of him didn't want to take it back. Yes, he'd keep it on principle now, and then demand the Alpha pay him compensation for trauma caused, and then child support, and then--

"Curious. And how will you raise it on your own?"

He brushed it off so easily. As if he could just dismiss it. As if the decision wasn't nearly as difficult for him as it was for Will. He was just going to go on with his life as if he wasn't half responsible for what had happened.

But the question was a difficult one. Will didn't have an answer for it, and judging by the pompous look on the Alpha's face, he knew it.

"I'll manage," he spat. "You'll pay child support."

"I suppose I'll have to," the Alpha said, straightening up. He began to gather his things, no longer deigning to look at Will. "I'll pay whatever's needed. But that's all you can expect from me. I take responsibility for my mistakes, but I don't have the time for anything more."

He was a jackass. Will was *glad* he wasn't going to have to raise a child with this man. You didn't need two parents, anyway. Will hadn't had two. "Fine," he ground out. "We don't need you."

We . As if there was enough there, at this point, to feel the loss. Will found his hand cupping his stomach. He always got attached too easily. He was *barely* pregnant, and yet here he was spitefully laying claim to it already.

The Alpha glanced down at where Will's hand rested, his face pinched. "Hannibal Lecter," he said.

"What?"

"My name. You'll need it for the paperwork."

Will blinked at him. “It sounds like a supervillain name,” he said, not realizing he’d spoken out loud until the other took a sharp breath but decided not to comment. Instead, he moved past Will and out of the library, leaving the Omega standing alone between the bookshelves.

Hannibal Lecter , Will thought, shoving both hands into his pockets again as he made his way to the door. *What a prick.*

Will found the paperwork through the student support center. He supposed he wasn’t the only one to have found himself in this kind of situation; student life was filled to the brim with new experiences. He just never thought that this would be one of them for him.

Will had always been a good kid, a too-quiet kid, a stay-inside-while-others-played kid. And now, not even a semester into his criminology degree, he was knocked up by a pompous, prideful, nasty--

Will still needed to call his dad. He really didn’t want to call his dad.

His dad was like any other Alpha parent, a bit overprotective, a bit disapproving. He wasn’t *too* old-fashioned. He’d been *thrilled* that Will’s post-high school plans included college.

But he *had* wanted Will to stay in state, and the week after Will received his acceptance letter had been filled with stony silence. As had the drive up from Louisiana.

Now, Will’s hands were shaking as he dialed the number. His dad was going to *flip* . He was going to have a dozen questions Will wasn’t prepared to answer.

Worse, he was going to *lecture.*

“Will? You’re calling awful late.”

“I’m pregnant,” Will blurted out, without so much as a hello.

There was a long, uncomfortable silence.

“You’re gonna have to say that again, son,” his dad said slowly, “because I *know* I didn’t hear you right. *My* boy would never be so stupid and irresponsible.”

Will couldn’t swallow past the lump in his throat, his mouth was filling with saliva, he felt like he was going to drown.

“It… it just happened.” Will tried again, his voice much softer this time. “I… I was careful and--”

“Careful would have been not getting yourself into this situation in the first place, William,” came the snapped reply. Will swallowed, somehow, and managed to take the rest of his excuses with it. “I told you that your hormones would be rife coming into a mixed environment like this. We spoke about the support you could get at your college.”

“I know,” Will replied meekly.

Harrison Graham sighed deeply through the phone and for a while the line just hummed with white noise. Neither hung up. Will wouldn't until he was dismissed anyway; he'd never be so rude as to cut off his own father on the line, and if Harrison was still holding the phone, it meant he had more to say.

"So, tell me about your mate," Will's dad asked grudgingly when the silence grew too heavy.

Here Will wished the earth would open up and swallow him. "There uh, isn't one?"

" *William."*

Will couldn't tell his father he'd been drunk, that would only make things worse. "It just… didn't happen."

"You hopped into a bed without even having the decency to get *bit* ?"

Will flinched. He knew he and his dad had different beliefs about pre-bond sex, but it was different to have the outrage aimed at *him* .

"It didn't come up?"

"Well, it's just gonna have to come up now, isn't it? You march your little ass over to that Alpha--"

"He didn't want it," Will ground out.

"What do you mean, he didn't *want* it?"

"I already told him. He doesn't want to be a father. He already agreed to pay child support."

Another horrible, drawn-out pause. "I'm coming up there," Harrison growled, voice so full of Alpha that even over the phone, Will felt the uncomfortable weight of it.

"Dad, don't--"

"Either you handle this mess you've gotten yourself into, Will, or I come up and deal with this Alpha myself."

"I'll do it," Will insisted. The last thing he needed was for his father to meet Hannibal and side with him. Will wanted to have nothing to do with the man ever again if he could help it; just signing the paperwork and getting the checks in the mail. "Dad, I'll do it, it's fine."

"It's not fine, Will," his father sighed. "You're an Omega with a pup on the way, unmated, unbonded… where will you live? How will you find work? Or a mate, now that you're used and abandoned."

Will's throat closed up again. "You raised me on your own…"

"Yes, and I wanted better for you," Harrison replied, softness creeping into his tone. "I didn't want you to have the same hardships. Talk to him, Will, remind him of his responsibility, you

both have to step up, now, as parents."

Will couldn't do more than nod. For a few more moments his dad spoke to him, updated Will on the boat business and the dogs at home, and they hung up soon after. Then Will crawled into bed, buried himself in blankets, and cried quietly.

"I need your signature," Hannibal held out a document for his aunt to look at. His uncle was out of town, again, and she was the only other person who could legally access Hannibal's inheritance until he came of age.

She took the paper and -- to Hannibal's great dismay -- began to read it. This was where his uncle was always the easier guardian; he trusted Hannibal to never give him something to sign that didn't need signing. His aunt, however, was curious.

"Hannibal," she said after a while, and Hannibal hummed, hands clasped behind his back as he waited. "If you've sired a pup, they're part of our family."

"I've already spoken to the Omega," he said stiffly. "He understood my position and agreed to the arrangement."

"Did he?" his aunt said, eyes still on the paper. "Or did you bowl over him as you Alphas are occasionally wont to do?"

"I would *never* ," Hannibal said, offended. "I merely made my position clear."

"Omegas are delicate creatures, Hannibal. They don't like to upset their Alphas."

There was nothing *delicate* about Will Graham, nor submissive. Hannibal's family had always been so old fashioned as to be a hindrance, though, and it was unlikely Murasaki would believe him if he pointed out that Will had no problem upsetting Hannibal.

"We would be a bad match," Hannibal said. "We're very… different."

"As were your uncle and I," Murasaki said. "Matches need not be perfect, they need only be practical. There are other reasons to bond beyond emotional attachment. Practicality, the merging of two families. The *creation* of a family." She gave him a cold, pointed stare.

"He won't want me," Hannibal warned.

"You made your choice when you chose to bed this Omega," she said. "Now you'll do the responsible thing, or bring shame on the family."

The entire remaining Lecter family was three people, but Hannibal knew that didn't matter to his aunt and uncle. What mattered was pride, and responsibility. Not siring bastards.

He knew she wouldn't sign the paper now, and waiting for his uncle to come home wouldn't work either; they regularly spoke and he'd be made aware of the situation by the evening phone call. With a sigh, he ducked his head in deference -- the only Omega he deferred to in his entire life -- and took the document back.

“Will Graham?”

Will looked up from his laptop and squinted, before taking his glasses off. There was Hannibal Lecter, again, standing in front of the desk Will had claimed at the very back of the library, looking far too prim and proper for someone barely into his nineteenth year.

“Hannibal Lecter,” Will replied, just as dry. “Was there something wrong with the paperwork?”

“Nothing wrong,” Hannibal replied, before taking a chair from a table near Will’s and pulling it up without asking if Will wanted the company. He didn’t. “But I may have been rash in making a decision. Your information caught me off guard.”

Will snorted. “Yeah, it caught me off guard too when my heat didn’t start like it should have.”

Hannibal pursed his lips and folded his hands on the table. It was so formal that Will felt like he was in the middle of a job interview. He tucked a pencil behind his ear to ground himself in reality instead.

“I have realized that I need to take the proper responsibility for this outcome,” Hannibal continued, very deliberately avoiding mentioning exactly what they were discussing. “And would like to propose we become a bonded pair to raise the pups together.”

Will blinked at him, dumbfounded. “I’m sorry, what?”

“You won’t get a better offer,” Hannibal pointed out, “in your condition. Or after, if we’re being realistic. This is the obvious choice going forward.”

Will bristled, everything in him revolting at the very thought. “How *dare* you,” he hissed. “What, you think you’re so special? God’s gift to Omegas?”

Hannibal’s eyes narrowed. “I’m from a good family,” he said. “I have the money to give you and the pups a good life.”

“I’m not for sale,” Will said, slamming his book closed.

“You need money,” Hannibal said. “The pups need an Alpha. Who else is going to raise someone else’s children?”

“Has it occurred to you that I don’t *want* an Alpha?” Will asked. “That the only person *my* pups need is *me?”*

“You’ll have to drop out if you want to raise them on your own,” Hannibal pointed out. “I’m a modern Alpha. I have no problem with you continuing your studies and working after.”

“How very generous.” Will’s hands were shaking. This was the perfect solution, technically. This was exactly what his father wanted, wasn’t it? “You didn’t want them. You walked away. I won’t have my pups raised by someone who detests them.”

“It was… wrong of me,” Hannibal said, the words so clearly paining him that Will actually felt a twinge of satisfaction. “I should have considered the consequences of my actions before flippantly offering to buy my way out of them.”

“You’re buying your way out of them now,” Will pointed out. He allowed himself a moment more to relish the look on Hannibal’s face before his own dropped and he sighed, bringing a hand up to his face to rub his eyes.

This was the best thing, in theory, that could have happened in this shitstorm of a situation. Will wouldn’t be alone in raising his young, he would have a home and a second income to keep himself and their pups supported, he wouldn’t have to worry about dropping his studies for an Alpha who held archaic views of what an Omega should be.

But the thought of sharing his space with this proud and truly awful man, the thought of being *bonded* to him, *mated,* so that he could have Will whenever he wanted, could control everything he did--

“I want to draw up a contract,” Will said finally. To his surprise, Hannibal nodded.

“Yes, a prenup would be a requirement.”

“No, not… not a prenup. A document where we make it very clear what this relationship is and is not, and have it signed. I don’t want to take you up on this and find out that you, in fact, want an entire litter of pups and won’t let me get a credit card.” Will gave Hannibal a hard look. “I want security, going into this. I’m giving up a lot more than you are.”

“Are you though?” Hannibal sighed. He narrowed his eyes at the fiery Omega before him, then cleared his throat, looking away. “Fine. A document. Where both of our terms are laid out clearly, and where a third party signs as witness.”

“Fine,” Will said. He was getting nauseous again. That had started a few days ago and hadn’t let up since. Or maybe it was being around Hannibal that was doing it. “I’ll email you my terms. You can have something drawn up and I’ll sign it and then we can… get the formalities over with.”

Will had gone slightly pink by the end of the sentence. The formalities involved sex, again. Will could barely remember the last time. Maybe Hannibal was awful in bed.

God, what if he was? Then Will would be stuck with him.

Hannibal, for his part, managed to keep his composure, though Will saw a slight twitch at the corner of his mouth. “I’ll await your email,” he said, and though Will could see the urge, he left it at that.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

In truth, it seemed like a fairly good arrangement.

If only they didn't hate each other so much.

Will's dad was thrilled that Will had managed to "convince the Alpha" to have him. Will wasn't thrilled at the wording. It suggested that there had been something wrong with *Will* and not *Hannibal* that their initial interaction was one of rejection. He was still far from happy with the arrangement but…it was the best that he could hope for, under the circumstances.

Circumstances they had both gotten themselves into.

Will had emailed Hannibal his terms by that evening, including his desire to remain in college, to get a job, and to potentially work in an industry outside of hospitality upon his graduation. It also included a clause which allowed Will to remain on birth control until they both felt they were comfortable enough to have more pups. Will couldn't outright deny the man sex, and his own instincts would kick in every three months, but he refused to become a pup factory. He'd included other things, most of them not petty, and wondered how hard he would have to fight Hannibal on them.

Not hard at all, as it turned out.

Hannibal had replied with his own list less than an hour later and had agreed to all of Will's terms.

And Hannibal's, Will found, were surprisingly civil also: He requested that Will not have extra-bond affairs and promised not to do so himself; he asked that he provide their lodgings and choose them. He made it clear that Will would be expected to keep house but listed the housework he was more than happy to take on himself, such as the cooking of their meals.

In truth, it seemed like a fairly good arrangement.

If only they didn't hate each other so much.

They met the next day at student services to get the document signed off by a third party and witnessed. Then, Will found himself fidgeting awkwardly as they lingered near the building after.

"So, uh," Will filled his cheeks with air and released the breath. "Where do you live?"

“I’m off campus,” Hannibal replied. “But our apartment will be elsewhere.”

“Can it be close enough to walk?” Will asked. “Or near the public transport system at least?”

“I could drive you in,”

“You said I wouldn’t have to be dependent,” Will snapped. Dread was creeping up his spine. The agreement they’d signed was binding, but there was so much space to twist things. Plenty of loopholes to leave Will trapped.

“Carpooling is hardly *dependency—”*

“I want to be able to leave whenever I want,” Will interrupted. “I don’t want to rely on you to get to class, or to get groceries, or, or just to leave the damned house!”

Hannibal looked at him. He sucked in a long, slow breath, held it for a moment, then let it out. “Fine. We’ll get you a car.”

“A *car* ,” Will said flatly.

“You’ll need one anyway if you ever need to take the pups to a doctor or other appointment while I’m not around.”

The certainty that Hannibal was trying to buy Will’s cooperation burned within him, but Hannibal seemed to be done with the conversation. He turned on his heel, gesturing towards the campus parking lot.

“Come. You wanted to ‘get the formalities over with,’ if I recall.”

Will didn't say anything as he followed after him. Yes, he wanted formalities over with. He wanted the contract signed and the stupid bonding bite to happen on the same day. He wanted time to come to terms with the fact that for the rest of his life he was bound to this man.

God…had he made the biggest mistake of his life?

Hannibal's car was, predictably, as pretentious as the man himself was; it was a goddamn Bentley. Hannibal unlocked the door and climbed into the driver's seat and waited for Will to get in on his own. All the better, really, Will thought he'd slap him if he tried any performative Alpha nonsense right then.

They were silent as they drove.

Will's hands were curled in helpless fists against his thighs as he breathed in the scent of the Alpha next to him. He radiated panic and distress, and it took a lot for Hannibal not to reach out and soothe him. It was entirely instinct that ached to, anyway, Hannibal himself was far from feeling affectionate.

This Will Graham, low-born, low-class, *no* class, Omega was now part of Hannibal's life. He'd have to take him to events, introduce him as his mate, suffer the ridicule of being

bonded to someone so uncouth…the fact that Will was handsome was certainly a bonus; their pups would carry both their features proudly.

Hannibal remembered Will only in the most vague flashes of memory. He'd been close to stumbling from inebriation when he'd caught himself against the beautiful Omega. He'd shamelessly breathed him in, smiled at the pleased purr he'd immediately pulled from the young man. He remembered both of them desperate and needy, he remembered nips against his lips and a hot tongue tracing his throat. He remembered nuzzling against him after, as his knot filled the Omega, and feeling absolutely at peace.

Maybe they just needed to be drunk to enjoy each other.

Many marriages throughout the centuries certainly were proof of the drink's effectiveness.

When he let Will into his apartment, locking the door behind him, Will looked absolutely petrified. As if Hannibal was about to throw him to the ground and knot him before the slick even began to spill. Hannibal stalked off to the kitchen to pour glasses of wine, trying not to grip the glass too tightly.

When he handed the glass to Will, he gave it a single glance before downing it like a cheap shot. He handed Hannibal the empty glass, wiping the back of his hand across his mouth.

"Charming," Hannibal drawled.

"I'm not here to impress you," Will said, arms folded across his chest. "It's not like it was hard the last time."

"My standards were much lower then."

"Fuck you!"

They stared at each other, both tense, both scowling. "This is getting us nowhere," Hannibal snapped. "You need to be more — "

"More *what* ? Compliant? *Obedient?"*

"I doubt you're capable of obedience," Hannibal muttered, and Will's eyes burned into him. You could cut the tension with a knife between them, and when they moved they moved at once, meeting in the middle with something that could have been cousin to the kiss if it weren't so violent.

IIt was more akin to a mauling.

All the anger, frustration, *panic,* made its way out of the two of them and into each other, fuelling the heat between them until, as the first time, instinct took over and thinking didn't matter.

Hannibal ducked for long enough to catch his hands beneath Will's thighs and lift him, shoving him up against a wall. When he nosed beneath Will's jaw, Will lifted his chin with a groan and yanked at Hannibal's hair.

Despite his nerves, Will could feel himself starting to slick, could feel his tiny cock harden between his legs. The less he thought about this, the easier it was to enjoy it. He could close his eyes and pretend that this was someone Will didn't find abhorrent…

Hannibal's teeth grazing his scent gland had Will trembling, arching up from the wall to rut against Hannibal instead. He wanted more. He wanted to be face down, drowning in Hannibal's scent, he wanted a knot, he wanted it to be over. If he allowed himself to actually think about it, though, he wanted it to last forever. This felt good. It felt *right* despite everything.

"Fuck me," Will groaned, wrapping his legs tighter around Hannibal, his free hand falling between their writhing bodies to cup the Alpha's growing erection. "Come on."

Hannibal turned, the motion effortless despite Will's weight. The apartment was spacious, but still a one-bedroom. It was only a matter of moments before he was tipping Will backwards onto the plush mattress.

Will scrambled back, hands going to the button of his jeans. He left his shirt — he didn't need to be naked for Hannibal to get this over with.

Kicking his jeans and boxers to the floor, Will shuffled backwards on the bed, watching. Hannibal *had* bothered with his shirt — and with *folding* it, as if he wasn't just as eager as Will.

"C'mere," Will demanded. Hannibal's eyes narrowed on him, and Will felt that *rush* of Alpha pheromones he usually only craved during his heat.

" *Present* ," Hannibal growled, and Will was on his stomach before he could even think to resist.

Will told himself it wasn't his fault. It wasn't like he *wanted* to fuck Hannibal. It was just in his nature to want this, when it was the father of his pups demanding it.

But his thighs were slick already and had been before Hannibal had spoken.

Hannibal's weight against him was more than welcome. Will moaned and deepened the arch in his back, let his knees slip to spread wider on the sheets. When he felt the blunt end of Hannibal's cock nudge against him Will stretched his arms out in front of him in a show of full submission. He wasn't going anywhere, he wasn't trying to escape. He was presenting for his Alpha, wanting him, *needing* him.

"Stay," Hannibal murmured, the sound pleasantly warm. He turned his head to nuzzle beneath Will's chin again, breathing him in and letting the scent get him even harder. Olfactorily, Hannibal never forgot a person, just a whiff of their scent was enough, and he remembered Will intimately. Now, the warmth of their previous encounter came back to him.

It had been a mutually enjoyable experience, though Hannibal had woken to an empty bed and a painful hangover the next morning. He remembered laughing with Will, kissing

sloppily against each other's mouths and faces, he remembered how desperately Will had called for him, had begged to be fucked and knotted.

Just as he was begging now, voice pulled taut and lovely as he demanded —

"Alpha *please!"*

Will's body was tight, clutching at Hannibal as he eased in, but the slide was smooth. Hannibal had heard that some Omegas had trouble getting slick outside of heat, but Will was practically dripping onto the bed. The room would smell of him for days, his scent staining the silk sheets.

Will made a sound, choked and needy. His spine curved, his backside pushing up towards Hannibal's hips.

He was the very picture of a perfect Omega, the sort that everyone fantasized about. That even *Hannibal* had occasionally indulged in thoughts of. Overgrown curls damp with sweat, pink lips parted around a helpless sound. An Omega in the throes of passion was an irresistible sight.

"Pretty thing," Hannibal hissed, because it was true whether Hannibal was fond of him or not. "Spread wider, let me have you."

Will moaned, knees slipping against the sheets. "Can't…get any wider," he gasped.

Hannibal hushed him, reaching beneath him to cup his belly, the place their pups would grow. He rolled his hips gently, listening to the soft '"ahs" that left Will's lips.

It wasn't a rough claiming, but it was possessive. Hannibal pressed his palm to Will's belly, slid it lower to stroke his little cock until Will came with a cry, then spread the mess to his stomach again.

All the while, Hannibal rocked himself deeper and deeper into his Omega — and he was his now, whether Hannibal wanted it or not — his knot swelling faster than it had before. Perhaps there was something to be said about instinct, knowing that the pups Will carried were his own, that they were about to bond, to mate, to have more and build a family together.

At that moment, Hannibal didn't mind the notion.

Perhaps it could be like this, if both learned to bend just a little. Perhaps bending just a little would be worth it, to hear Will plead for him and whimper and whine, smearing spit against the silk as his hands clutched white-knuckled against the pillows.

"Alpha," Will panted, blind with lust and need, "Alpha, knot…knot, *please — "*

"Chin up," Hannibal breathed, nosing behind Will's ear, then down to the place his pulse hammered against his pale skin. His knot shoved closer against Will, and he felt the resistance that came just before submission, felt his own body fill with heat and need and *pushed.*

Will realized he was sobbing only when a hand came up to wipe the tears from under his eyes. Hannibal had bitten down hard, had left a very prominent bond mark against Will's skin. He'd licked it clean, and now, knot holding them tied and body pressed heavy against Will's once more, he was purring.

It was a low sound, but gentle. Warm. It made Will immediately feel safe. He just needed to stop thinking about where he was, and with whom, and what this meant for the two of them. Will reached out for Hannibal's hand and found that, after a minute's hesitation, it was given.

It hurt.

Not physically, though Will felt full, of course. But he was also split open, raw. His emotions were exposed nerve endings, and his breath left him in a shudder.

Hannibal rolled onto his side, pulling Will with him rather than tugging the knot out too soon and hurting him. He curled around Will, rubbing circles over Will's stomach with his free hand, his purr warm against Will's back.

Will closed his eyes against tears, drawing in long, slow breaths. It was impossible not to be soothed by Hannibal, his scent thick in the air, the bond bite still throbbing. Will's instincts told him that he would never be safer than he was here, with Hannibal.

Hannibal would protect him and their pups. Maybe he didn't want to, but he would. He wouldn't be able to stop himself.

And Will…Will could do worse, he supposed.

When the knot deflated, Will rolled away, curling in on himself despite the wet spot he'd rolled into. He watched Hannibal warily, unsure what to make of him now that the haze of need was beginning to wear off.

Hannibal sat up, stretching his arms over his head before draping them over his knees. He gave Will a brief once-over before sighing.

"Perhaps we started out on the wrong foot," he offered, biting down the desire to have *Will* offer peace first. "I was rude. I apologize. If we're to live together it would be easier to do so without conflict."

Will blinked at him. He hadn't in truth, expected any sort of give in this relationship, let alone an apology, and it was a pleasant surprise. He allowed himself a moment to think, already knowing the answer, before nodding and gently easing himself to sit up as well, wincing at the stretch. Balanced on one arm, he held out his other hand.

"Will Graham," he said, "first year criminology major, only child, apparently a bit of a mess when it comes to alcohol."

Hannibal's lips tilted just enough to suggest a smile and he took Will's hand.

"Hannibal Lecter," he replied, "second year double major in medicine and fine arts. Orphan. Prone to quick judgements."

Will's smile came much easier this time, and he ducked his head in a nod, a brief thank you for the olive branch. It could have gone worse, after all.

The peace was short lived but their bickering wasn't as biting as it had been from the beginning. Most of it revolved around Will's apparent "messy" attitude and Hannibal's very clear obsession with keeping their apartment show-home clean.

Hannibal had secured them an apartment on the fifth floor of one of the newer buildings near the city center, close to all the public transport Will could desire, and not far enough from campus that a walk would be impossible. He also purchased Will a car, as he'd promised, and Will still couldn't get over the fact that it was a goddamn Volvo.

"I could've just driven a pick up," he pointed out, when Hannibal handed him the keys.

"But you needn't," Hannibal replied, the implication clear that he wouldn't have been seen dead with Will were he to drive anything lesser than the highest quality of vehicle.

It felt a little too much like being a kept house Omega for Will's tastes, though Hannibal had kept his word and stuck to their prenup. Will went to all his classes without so much as a grumble of distaste at his chosen field. Hannibal cooked all their meals and was unfairly good at it.

They shared a room, because the second bedroom would eventually be the nursery, but Will crashed on the couch more often than not. He had no desire to let his guard down near Hannibal and to risk losing himself to Omega instinct again.

They hadn't had sex since their bonding.

Will thought about it often, his fingers running over the scar on his neck. He couldn't help himself. Between the pregnancy and the thick scent of *his Alpha* that permeated everything, his hormones were going crazy.

He stood in the doorway to the kitchen one night, watching Hannibal stir some sort of sauce.

"I want to bite you," he found himself saying. It seemed unfair that he alone should bear the mark of their mistake.

Hannibal did not look up. "Despite popular trends, there's no biological reason for an Omega to bite an Alpha."

Will snorted. "I thought you were a 'modern Alpha,'"

"Certainly," Hannibal did look up then, briefly, and drew the spoon over the back of his hand to leave some sauce behind to taste. "We share living quarters that are spacious and comfortable, you have the means to come and go as you please, we share household chores, you study."

Hannibal reached for some herbs from the wall of them he'd started growing in their kitchen, and pinched them between his fingers before adding them to the pot. "But there is no

biological reason for you to leave a mark on me. It would be purely aesthetic."

"So?"

"So it isn't my aesthetic," Hannibal concluded, giving Will a look before turning off the stove. "Set the table, please."

Will's fingertips felt cold, his knees felt locked in place, and he was *sad.* He wasn't even upset anymore; he was just sad. With a sigh, he brought a hand up to his face before stepping into the kitchen to get the cutlery.

He set one place at the table, for Hannibal, and moved off to their bedroom with a book, calling over his shoulder that he wasn't hungry when Hannibal asked him why he wasn't joining him. In truth, he was starving, as their pups grew in his belly, Will felt more and more inclined towards not only expanding his palate but the number of meals he had a day. But if this was the most he could offer in passive resistance then he would do it.

Hannibal didn't call him back to the table, and by the time he washed the dishes and came to bed, Wil was already gone from there, too. Hannibal found him curled up in the soon-to-be nursery, a haphazard nest made of one of the blankets from their bed, some cushions, and Hannibal's heavy winter coat.

Hannibal stood and watched him a moment, not wanting to wake Will up, but also feeling a tugging need to make sure Will was safe and comfortable and warm before Hannibal himself retired. He went to retrieve the knitted blanket from their couch and laid it over Will's form, tucking him in.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

“You’ll be happy to know there’s nothing wrong. You’ve got a small litter, that’s all, just the one pup.”

Will stiffened. “One?” It wasn’t unheard of, but it was rare.

“If I may, Mr. Graham, you’re very young to be having a litter,” the doctor said gently.

The boys get some news and grow closer

Will worried.

He worried often-- it was an old, unbreakable habit-- but those worries had only increased as the pregnancy continued.

Wasn’t he meant to be… fatter?

Coming into his fourth month of pregnancy, his belly had only just developed a curve. It was the barest hint of a bump, only beginning to tug at the waistband of his jeans. He had some difficulty buttoning them, but nothing too bad.

“You don’t eat enough,” Hannibal lectured. He’d been offering to take Will for maternity clothes for two weeks now, but Will hadn’t seen the point.

“ *You* carry the pups for a bit, we’ll see how much you can keep down,” Will muttered.

“The pups need to be fed. You barely eat enough for yourself, let alone a litter. I’m going to start packing you a lunch. And you should make a doctor’s appointment.”

Will hadn’t had it in him to argue. He took the lunch Hannibal packed him, and ate as much as he could of it. He tried to eat more at dinner, though sometimes nausea really unbalanced those scales by having Will heaving over the toilet in the middle of the night bringing it all back up again.

He made a doctor’s appointment.

Hannibal, to his credit, seemed genuinely unhappy that he wouldn’t be able to attend it with Will.

“I have a major lab that day, it’s impossible to postpone,”

“I could set another appointment if you like,” Will offered. Hannibal shook his head.

“You’re worried. Find out what’s going on, and we can figure out what to do going forward. Let me know how it goes when you finish.”

Will had nodded, tense and fretting, but hadn’t said more about it. But that night when he’d curled up on the couch to watch something stupid on TV, Hannibal had come to sit next to him. And when Will had leaned against his shoulder and tucked his nose to Hannibal’s scent gland, Hannibal had wrapped an arm around him and held him securely to his side.

It wasn’t intimacy, but it was something. Will was grateful for it, whatever it was.

The appointment was at some fancy medical practice that Hannibal had most likely set his sights on working at after college, but he had registered both himself and Will there, and Will had to admit the service was excellent. He even noticed that one of the nurses was an Omega, and the thought warmed him.

If they were open minded enough for that, perhaps he could trust them with his concerns. He’d have to regardless but this made him feel safer.

When he was called in, the doctor was a portly Alpha. He introduced himself as Dr. Goldwin and asked if Will would mind an intern of his sitting on their consult. Will had never been good at saying no, but the young Beta that joined them was polite and soft-spoken, and pretty soon Will forgot she was even there.

“How can I help you, Mr. Graham?” Dr. Goldwin asked, setting his hands to the keyboard.

“I’m about four months along,” Will explained. “I haven’t… I’ve been procrastinating on my prenatal visits. This is my first. I feel like I should be heavier by this point? I haven’t been able to keep much down.”

“Nausea is common,” the doctor assured him. “Some Omegas only experience it in the first trimester, but many carry it with them on and off through the pregnancy. I can recommend some anti-nausea medication that’s pregnancy safe before you leave. Tea will also help.”

Dr. Goldwin checked the screen, eyes roaming over the basic information a nurse had already filled in. “You *are* a little underweight for this far along,” he admitted. “What do you say we take a look?”

“Please,” Will said gratefully.

The doctor had Will lay out on the exam table and push his shirt up around his armpits. The gel was cool and the pressure was uncomfortable as the doctor used the wand to examine his insides.

“Ahh. Yes, I see.”

“What?” Will asked, heartbeat stuttering.

“You’ll be happy to know there’s nothing wrong. You’ve got a small litter, that’s all, just the one pup.”

Will stiffened. “One?” It wasn’t unheard of, but it was rare.

“If I may, Mr. Graham, you’re very young to be having a litter,” the doctor said gently. “Still growing, even if I’m sure you feel like you must be done now that you’re on your own. One is really better for your body at this point in life, and it’s normal for an Omega your age. 40% of teen pregnancies are singles.”

Teen pregnancy.

Will had almost completely forgotten about that particular factor; he and Hannibal were young, certainly, but they never spoke about their ages much. They had no need to. Now, Will felt the same crawling, clawing guilt and shame eat at his insides as it had when he’d first found out he was pregnant. He just nodded numbly as Dr. Goldwin cleaned the gel up from Will’s stomach and returned to his desk.

Will followed a few moments later, taking his seat once more.

The doctor prescribed some vitamins that would help Will’s pup develop, wrote out a prescription for the anti-nausea medication he could take. They spoke, but not at length, about what to look out for, what milestones Will should be meeting with his weight and size, now that he knew he was having a litter of one.

By the time Will left the appointment, his head was buzzing with nerves. His phone hummed with a message from Hannibal asking if he was alright. Will wondered if it was possible to stop breathing and start to hyperventilate at the same time.

He called Hannibal back.

“How was the lab?”

“Admirably challenging,” Hannibal replied. Will could hear the sound of people filing out behind him. He must have just been leaving the lecture theatre. “What did the doctor say? Are you alright?”

Will sucked his bottom lip between his teeth for a moment. He didn’t know if he should put on a jovial tone for this news or not. He didn’t know how any of this would sit with Hannibal. He decided on clear and simple.

“I’m having a small litter,” he said, “just the one pup. Dr. Goldwin says it’s quite common for Omegas my… age… to have a singleton as a first pregnancy.”

Hannibal hummed distractedly. “Yes, I wondered if that might be it when you didn’t gain much weight. But difficult pregnancies are also common for younger Omegas, so I wanted to be sure.”

“Oh,” Will said in a small voice. Hannibal had actually done the research. Of course he had. There was a small stack of books on Will’s bedside table. They’d shown up the week they

moved in, and Will hadn't touched them once.

It had seemed unreal, until now. Now, Will had a tiny black-and-white photo in his school bag, tucked into a zippered pocket. His baby. His single pup.

"I need to hang up to drive," Hannibal said. "I'll make rice with dinner; you seemed to have less trouble with that."

"Yeah. Okay, bye." Will hung up, slumping over in the driver's seat.

He knew, objectively, that some men didn't finish growing until their very early twenties, that legal adulthood didn't mean his body was finished with its work, but it hadn't occurred to him that it would affect his pregnancy. That there would be something… something *wrong* with him.

God, he couldn't even *fuck up* correctly.

He folded his arms over the steering wheel and pressed his face against them, sobbing softly. He was overly emotional, he was nauseous, he was tired and nervous and he wanted to be comforted, to be told everything would be alright, even though it absolutely wouldn't be. He wanted someone to love him, to want him.

But he had what he had.

And he had to suck it up.

After several long moments, Will sat back and wiped his eyes, and a little while later he started the car and drove home.

He beat Hannibal there, and took the time to pin the picture of their pup to the fridge before moving to the couch to curl up on it. He wasn't hungry. He wasn't anything.

He didn't know how long he lay there until he heard Hannibal open the door, but it hardly mattered; Will didn't get up to greet him. He only answered when Hannibal called his name because it seemed rude not to. He could hear Hannibal setting groceries to the counter, could hear the slight intake of breath as he saw the picture on the fridge.

Then Hannibal's footsteps were drawing nearer and Will had no idea how to keep face, how to be happy, or neutral, or anything at all but absolutely devastated. He did try, though, giving Hannibal a trembling little smile.

"That's ours," he managed, before his voice broke and Will started to cry again, helpless and messy, like a child.

"Will."

Will didn't know what to do with a voice like that, so full of *concern* . It didn't sound right, coming from Hannibal. Coming from a glorified roommate. Will cried harder, face tucked into his hands.

He heard Hannibal's footsteps circle the couch. Between his fingers, he could see the dark fabric of Hannibal's slacks.

"Will." Softer this time. Almost gentle. Will hiccuped.

"I'm s'rry," he mumbled. "I was supposed to give you a litter." It was in the contract, after all. In every discussion they'd had. *Pups* . Plural. "I just keep fucking this up."

For once, Hannibal didn't chide him on his language. Instead, gentle hands encircled Will's wrists, guiding his own hands away from his face.

"Will," Hannibal said gently, "I'm not disappointed in you."

Will tried to scoff, tried to find a witty rejoiner, but he couldn't. He couldn't stop crying. He heard Hannibal sigh, felt the couch dip beside him as Hannibal sat down, and then he was being tugged close, guided to crawl into Hannibal's lap.

So Will *did.* Fuck it all, he did crawl into his Alpha's lap for comfort, and he did wrap his arms around Hannibal's neck and he did tuck his face to his scent gland and breathed deep. He allowed himself to take the comfort offered, to not overthink it, to not wonder when the other shoe would drop and Hannibal would tell him how useless he was that he couldn't even carry a *litter.*

Hannibal, for his part, held Will close. He stroked his back and hushed his sobbing, he let his eyes close as he breathed Will in against him, nosed at his curls, felt a purr start rumbling and warm in his chest.

He hadn't expected Will to be so upset by the news. Medically, nothing was untoward here; Will's body would sustain the life and delivery of a singleton much better than a littler any larger, he would be able to concentrate all his attention and love on their first, without worrying that he wasn't stretching himself enough for several.

And there would be more. There could be more.

"Beautiful boy," Hannibal whispered. "Beautiful Omega. You've done nothing wrong. You've been perfect."

Will let out a little mewl, soft and mournful. He'd been planning for multiples; perhaps he'd already gotten attached. Hannibal could admit to having been a tad excited himself, and he hadn't been the one carrying them.

Will and Hannibal were not friends. But they'd developed a sort of camaraderie by necessity, after weeks of living together, and Hannibal ached to see him like this. He pressed a kiss to Will's crown.

"Our pup will be beautiful," Hannibal whispered. He dragged the blanket from the back of the couch, cocooning them both in warmth. "And all the more loved for having our full attention. Imagine how much time you'll have to bond. And to rest," he added wryly, "if you can just pass the pup to me for a bit."

Will let out a watery laugh. “You’re going to babysit?”

“It’s not babysitting,” Hannibal said, giving Will’s curls a gentle, teasing tug. “They’re as much my pup as yours, and I’ll love them even if you never give me another.”

Will leaned back to look at him a moment, letting himself properly take in Hannibal’s expression. He found no lies there, no mockery. Will believed him. With a sigh, he nodded. Then he leaned into Hannibal again, taking advantage of his warmth and his gentleness a while longer.

He was certain that any moment now Hannibal would pat him on the back and tell Will to get up so Hannibal could go about whatever business he had planned. But Hannibal held him securely and softly, until it was Will who pulled away first.

It happened by accident, and only the one time, but ever since that one time when Will had had a bad dream and fell off the couch, Hannibal had been adamant that he nest in bed with him.

As Will reached the six month mark, Hannibal had started to put his foot down.

“You’ll be more comfortable,” he insisted one weekend, as Will sat on the couch with his feet up and one of his textbooks open in his lap. Hannibal leaned against the doorframe with a cup of coffee. “And safer. Both of you.”

“I can nest in the nursery,” Will suggested. He’d done it before, on bad days.

“On the floor?”

Will shrugged, avoiding Hannibal’s knowing eyes. It hadn’t been exactly comfortable, although the ability to wrap himself in strong Alpha scent without judgement had been great.

Hannibal crossed the room to stand beside him, as if he knew how easily Will would fold if he could smell him. The further along Will got, the more he craved that closeness. He wanted to wrap himself up in Hannibal.

Lately, Hannibal had been nicer to him. And Will had returned that kindness. It was almost like a real relationship, sometimes. Without the sex, at least.

Not that Will hadn’t been *dreaming* of the sex, but that was a line he couldn’t cross. It wasn’t like Hannibal would want him anyway, he’d made that very clear.

“Will,” Hannibal said, in that soft, gentle voice he used when he wanted something from Will. He reached for him, cupping his jaw like he was Will’s proper Alpha and not just a match of necessity. Will blinked up at him, eyes a little wider just from that touch. “I would very much appreciate it if you would nest in the bed with me.”

Will made a soft sound and let his eyes close, let his chin rest heavier against Hannibal's palm. Hannibal's thumb stroked over Will's cheek, over his lips. When Will parted them,

Hannibal's breath caught and he eased just the tip of his thumb between them before pulling it away.

"Do you feel unsafe?" Hannibal asked him instead. Will hummed, blinking his eyes open to look up at him.

"No," he said. It wasn't entirely a lie. Hannibal saw through it, but instead of scoffing, he crouched down in front of Will and set his coffee aside to hold Will's face with both hands.

"Shall we arrange the room how you would like it?" He asked. Will blinked at him, surprised.

"You don't - we don't have to."

"A nest should feel safe for the Omega," Hannibal said. "You weren't here when the movers brought our furniture in, perhaps they set the bed wrong."

Will hadn't ever considered that the *bed had been set wrong,* but the fact that Hannibal had, that he was willing to turn his showhome home upside down for Will's sake made his throat tighten. Without a word he nodded, just once, and couldn't help but smile when Hannibal smiled back.

He wasn't sure Hannibal had ever smiled at him like that before. His heart was racing. So Will nodded again.

Hannibal refused to let Will pull weight or carry anything heavier than a mug of tea, but he was set to coordinating the move. The bed went from being under the window to being turned against the opposite wall. Their dresser took its original place, along with one of the bookcases from the corridor, to balance out the room.

By the time everything was moved, Hannibal had sweat on his brow and Will couldn't stop smiling. He'd never seen Hannibal look so… disheveled. It suited him. The blush in the apples of his cheeks was fetching. Will wanted to reach out and touch him, rub himself up against him.

When Hannibal sat heavily beside Will on the bed, Will did reach over to muss his hair, nuzzling his cheek after, entirely affectionate and unashamed.

It was better this way. Against the wall, away from the window, Will would be able to curl up with Hannibal between himself and the rest of the world. He would feel *safe* . Maybe Hannibal would press him against the wall, his body curved protectively around Will’s sandwiching him and the pup until all Will could smell was Alpha and safety.

But Will was getting ahead of himself. He was fantasizing. The best he could hope for was the comfort of a shared bed and the relief of having Hannibal between himself and the entrances to the room.

He couldn’t pull himself away from Hannibal, though. He looked so handsome like this, slightly sweaty and with a flush across his face. And when Will leaned against him, he reached an arm around Will’s waist.

This close, the scent was stronger. This close, Will could turn his face and tuck his nose against the scent gland in Hannibal’s neck. Hannibal’s hand skimmed up his side, over his shoulder, cupping right over the bonding bite. Will let out a small, irrepressible sound.

He didn’t know who rolled them, who started it, whose thin thread of control snapped first. But suddenly he was on his back, Hannibal between his thighs, belly squished uncomfortably between them as they kissed.

Will drew his knees up, hands in Hannibal's hair, trying to arch up to rut against him and finding himself unable. He whined again, frustrated, and whimpered in pleasure when Hannibal kissed over his bond mark instead, soothing him.

"Want you," Will sighed, grinning when Hannibal's growl rumbled through him, possessive and deep. God, Will had dreamed of this, of Hannibal filling him, fucking him, enjoying him, telling Will how good, and beautiful, and perfect he was.

All dreams, of course, but Will had woken slick more and more from them. And now…

"Hannibal, please -"

"Lay back," Hannibal murmured, pushing himself up and back, working Will's sweatpants off him and tossing them to the floor. He spread Will's legs and nuzzled between them, breathing in the heat and need and want of Will before taking his tiny cock between his lips and sucking him down.

"Oh!" Will bit his lip and clawed at the sheets. He could reach Hannibal's hair but barely, it was a stretch, and this, just this, was so good he could barely think.

"More," Will whined, grinning, trembling, needy. "Please more… Hannibal --"

Hannibal had thought of this too. As he and Will shared space, as he learned Will's mannerisms and routines, as he learned his smells and his moods, Hannibal found himself with a bit of a crush. More and more, he caught himself looking at Will as he read, or touched his belly, or lay lazy on the couch. More and more Hannibal wanted to touch him, and scent him, and nuzzle close.

And now Will was letting him, and it was everything Hannibal had imagined and more. This close, he could smell the faintest traces of slick, just beginning to form. Will’s moans sounded as though he was starved for it, and perhaps he was, sleeping on the couch for so long. Perhaps they had both been hungry for each other.

“Hannibal,” Will groaned. “Come up here, please, please I want you.”

Hannibal smiled around Will’s cock. He knew what an Omega’s refractory period was, typically, and he had no doubt Will would impress him. He kept himself where he was, teasing at the head of Will’s cock until Will gasped and arched his back.

“Hannibal, I’m close.”

Hannibal reached between Will’s thighs, rubbing two fingers at his entrance, coaxing slick and whines from Will in equal measures.

“Yes, yes, put it *in,* ” Will demanded.

Hannibal hummed around him and Will came, shuddering and trying to squeeze his thighs together around Hannibal's head. He was panting when Hannibal pulled away and very deliberately licked his lips. With a sleepy smile Will reached out to him.

"Your goddamn mouth, Hannibal," he murmured, tugging Hannibal close to kiss him again as he wriggled beneath, trying to find a position that would be comfortable for sex.

Because there was no way in hell they were stopping now.

Hannibal pulled back to nuzzle against him, nose against nose, a purr rumbling forth to join with Will's.

"I want you in me," Will whispered, lips tickling Hannibal's as he denied him another kiss. "Deep as you can go. Fill me up."

Hannibal growled, tantalizing and deep. “Then *present* , sweet Omega.”

Will moaned, rolling onto his stomach. He couldn’t lay like that, but if he propped himself onto hands and knees, the weight was not so bad.

Especially when Hannibal draped himself over Will’s back, one hand splayed over his belly to hold him up and against Hannibal. His cock nudged at Will’s backside, slightly off at first but quickly catching his slick rim.

“Please,” Will whispered, tucking his heated face against the bed.

“Patience,” Hannibal said. He eased forward, slow, steady. Will moaned and dug his nails into the sheets. Hannibal pressed his lips to Will’s ear, teeth tugging at a lobe “Patience, Will, and I’ll give you everything you need.”

Will shivered, held and horny and needed and needy.

He believed him.

Both had been patient for long enough, now, both had been tiptoeing around the other worried that any advances would be seen as untoward, unwelcome. Both had waited, and now both had what they'd wanted.

Was it really so simple? Could they have had this all along if they weren't both such stubborn men?

Will was prepared to let go of his pride if it meant more moments like this, his Alpha curled over him, rocking slowly and deliberately into Will's willing, slick body. God, he'd been craving this for weeks, the touch of his Alpha, the stretch of his body accommodating him.

"Such a good boy for me," Hannibal purred, dropping his hand for a moment from Will's belly to his aching cock to stroke him off in time with Hannibal's thrusts. "Presenting so beautifully, taking everything I give you."

This was what Will craved. To be held so close, to be loved so thoroughly. To have an Alpha praising him, *his* Alpha, *Hannibal* , specifically. To not feel like such a failure.

And how could he feel like a failure, with Hannibal over and in him, whispering words of praise and comfort?

Let me keep this, Will thought. *Let me still have this, after. Let this be more than just sex* .

Tears gathered at the corner of his eyes. Will arched, baring his neck, the bite long-since healed but still the soft pink of a new mark.

If their mating had been like this, Will would have loved him from the start. If they'd carried over the affection from their first drunken night, Will could never have resisted him.

"Bite," Will moaned. "Alpha, Hannibal, please bite me."

Overwrite the anger. Erase how much it hurt me to choose this. Choose me. ***Want*** *me.*

Hannibal bit down, not as hard as the first time, the skin still sensitive, still more prone to tearing than the skin around it. He bit through until Will felt blood slip slick down his chin, until Hannibal's knot squeezed past the tight ring of Will's ass and plugged him up as Hannibal's seed filled him again.

Hannibal's hips kept rocking gently forward, a bare tug and push against Will as Hannibal's knot tied them together. He licked lovingly over the bite he'd made again, his purr so loud now he could barely hear himself think. He nuzzled Will's face, his hair, scenting him again, mingling their smells together so the room smelled of them entirely.

Hannibal eased Will off his knees and to his side, wrapping an arm protectively and possessively over Will's belly as they lay together.

When Will threaded their fingers together, Hannibal squeezed back reassuringly, and kissed his cheek.

Maybe they could have this. Maybe this was a way to start over, a rearranging of their initial contract to something better, something more suited to their particular needs, as they had moved the bed to better accommodate a nest.

Hannibal hoped so. He wished so, desperately. Because what they had now, this trust, this softness, this closeness, he wasn't willing to give it up again.

Not for pride, not for anything.

He licked against Will's jaw, tucked him even closer against himself, and breathed him in. Actions spoke louder than words; he wasn't going to make promises, he was just going to keep those he should have made from the very beginning.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

> *He couldn't have cared less for the upholstery of the Bentley. He couldn't have cared less for the mess. He held Will's hand tight with one of his own as he drove with the other. He cared that they got to the hospital quickly and his Omega was taken care of.*
>
> *When asked if he wanted to be in the room for the delivery, Hannibal said yes.*

Things changed.

They curled around each other now while they slept, sometimes with the curve of Will's stomach pressed between them, the pup shielded by their bodies. Sometimes with Will's back to Hannibal's chest and Hannibal curled both around and *over* him, so that there was little sign that Will was in the bed at all.

They sat together on the couch to do homework, Will's feet in Hannibal's lap. They even *bathed* together, though the apartment tub was only *just* large enough to fit both of them.

Through it all, Will grew rounder, heavier. He slowed, exhaustion overwhelming him. He regularly fell asleep in the middle of his homework, and his focus when Hannibal attempted to help prepare him for finals was almost zero.

"I won't be able to do this," he mumbled into Hannibal's chest one night. He was meant to be asleep. They'd gone to bed nearly an hour before.

"Do what?" Hannibal murmured back. He sounded sleepy. Will had woken him.

"Never mind," he whispered, "go back to sleep."

"No," Hannibal said, cupping Will's chin in his hand and tilting his head back to nuzzle at his bond bite. "Tell me. What won't you be able to do?"

"Everything!" Will said, tears pricking at the corner of his eyes. "The baby, school. I should be working, too, I don't contribute anything to the apartment. I'm going to have to drop out and then everything I worked for…"

"Hey," Hannibal's hands were gentle as he stroked Will's face, cupping his cheeks and stroking beneath his eyes, catching tears before they could fall. "You're growing our pup in your body, you're protecting them and caring for them every day. You're contributing more than enough."

Will sniffed almost angrily, turning his face against Hannibal's chest again. "It doesn't feel like it," he mumbled.

He knew they were not financially insecure, Hannibal had made it very clear that he was monied and that they would be provided for. Sometimes that brought comfort, knowing that whatever happened they wouldn't be out on the street with a newborn. Other times Will found himself panicking, again, that he was being bought; made into a kept thing good for nothing but pushing out litters.

"You can postpone your finals with compassionate consideration," Hannibal reminded him. "And return to study when you feel comfortable to."

"But what if you… if you like me staying home? What if that's the kind of Omega you realize you want?"

"Then I'll adjust my expectations," Hannibal shrugged. "Because *my* Omega wants to study, and work once he's graduated."

Will couldn't help a little smile. "Just like that?"

"Just like that."

It seemed unreal. Hannibal had seemed like such a traditionalist when they met, and here he was, offering Will everything he wanted on a silver platter.

A soft rumble bubbled up in Will's chest. Not quite a purr, but the beginnings of one. Something hopeful, something… happy.

When had he become happy?

They decorated the nursery, though Will thought it was ridiculous. "We'll both want the pup in with us," he said, standing in the hallway (the closest Hannibal would allow him while he was painting) with his arms folded. "We're never going to *use* this."

"Eventually we'll want to transition them to the nursery," Hannibal said, "and when that happens, we'll be too busy raising them to do any decent decorating. Better to get it out of the way now."

They'd chosen a soft blue, because Will had insisted that blue was a gender neutral color-- "All colors are gender neutral, Hannibal,"-- and Hannibal had a splash of paint across his nose. It was surprisingly attractive.

Or maybe that was just hormones. Creeping into the last few weeks, Will's sex drive had yet to slow down.

He didn't so much jump Hannibal in the hallway when he'd finished painting, but he clung to him and groaned as Hannibal drew up a knee for Will to rut against, getting himself off.

It was the most they could do, now, with how large Will was getting. Will still panicked that he would fuck up, so close to the end of his pregnancy; he worried that he wasn't eating what

he should have been, he worried that he wasn't moving enough, or too much, he worried that everything could go wrong, and it would be over. All of it.

The closer they drew to Will's due date, the more doting Hannibal became. It was unfair to say that he hadn't been doting up til that moment; since they rearranged their bedroom for better nesting, Hannibal had been an incredibly attentive partner. But now he hovered around Will, ready with food, a blanket, a glass of water, his own arms for a reassuring embrace. Whatever Will needed or thought he could need.

When Will's water broke, it was Hannibal who made a helpless sound of surprise and delight before gathering his partner to him to get him into the car.

He couldn't have cared less for the upholstery of the Bentley. He couldn't have cared less for the mess. He held Will's hand tight with one of his own as he drove with the other. He cared that they got to the hospital quickly and his Omega was taken care of.

When asked if he wanted to be in the room for the delivery, Hannibal said yes.

It hurt. Even with the epidural--which they took *far* too long to give him, withholding it until the very last minute-- it hurt. Will went from pacing to crying as the pup took its sweet time, drawing things out for hours and hours.

"You should go home," Will panted, somewhere around the thirteenth hour of discomfort. Contractions had finally begun, but not close enough together for the doctors to get things *moving.* "Get some sleep. A sh-shower."

Hannibal kissed his cheek. "I'm right where I need to be."

In the end, Hannibal was up in the bed with him when it happened, Will pulled snug against his chest and gripping his hands like he'd fall apart without him. When the cry finally came, Will nearly collapsed with relief.

He was sweaty, aching. He felt like all of his organs had spilled out along with the pup.

But when they handed him the baby, pink and wriggling, Will no longer cared. "Oh. Hello, baby," he said, tugging the infant close to his chest. "Oh. Oh, Hannibal, *look* ."

"Beautiful Will," Hannibal praised him, licking his cheek, his jaw, nuzzling against him and purring so loudly; so, so loudly. The doctor told them they were proud parents of a healthy baby boy and Will started sobbing, clutching the baby, and leaning against his mate. He did it. They did it. Their pup was here and he was perfect.

They took the baby to be cleaned and Hannibal took the time to clean Will up himself. Beyond licking away his tears, he was given a soft cloth and warm water to slough away the blood and sweat from Will's body, still trembling with exhaustion. By the time their son was returned to Will, and the nurse guided him on how to get the baby to latch, Will was half awake.

“It’s late,” the nurse told Hannibal as he watched, enthralled and absolutely smitten as Will fed their pup. “Alphas are welcome to stay, of course, but they’ll both be resting for a while. You may as well go home and get some rest yourself.”

Will glanced up through hazy eyes, barely able to look away from their pup. He looked absolutely devastated when he said, “you should. It’ll be a while until they let us go home.”

Hannibal crouched beside him, nuzzling Will’s temple and reaching out to trace a finger over the soft baby cheek pressed to Will’s chest. “I’ll stay,” he said softly. “Ridiculous boy, of *course* I’ll stay.”

Will’s room had a stiff, uncomfortable couch in it with easily-cleaned plasticky cushions, but when Hannibal attempted to set himself up in it, Will’s wide, hurt eyes followed him throughout the room.

He would never say anything, never demand Hannibal’s time or attention. He didn’t seem to realize that by now, it was all his by right. Hannibal may have been resentful, at first, but now he would give Will the world, if he could.

Hannibal ended up falling asleep in a chair, his hands wrapped around one of Will’s, Will’s other hand resting on the edge of the plastic bassinet set up for their baby. He’d meant only to stay until Will fell asleep, but once they were touching he couldn’t pull himself away.

Will managed to convince Hannibal to go home and change the next afternoon; he’d never seen the man look so disheveled and so happy about it before. When Hannibal returned, with a change of clothes for Will, and one of the soft knitted blankets Hannibal’s aunt had made for them for the baby, Will was feeding their boy again.

Will had always worried - of course he had - that he would be useless at everything when it came to parenting. He’d worried that he would hate breastfeeding, that he wouldn’t be able to do it for as long as medically necessary. He’d worried that the baby wouldn’t latch, or be too weak, or not want Will to feed him.

All worries unfounded, because their boy had a very healthy appetite. Will had just transferred him to his other breast when Hannibal stepped into the room. Will smiled up at him.

“We need to get the paperwork done for him before they can discharge us,” he reminded him. “Legal things. His name.”

“He does need a name,” Hannibal agreed, taking the chair at Will’s side of the bed again. They’d talked a little about names, never in depth. Will had immediately shot down him being a ‘junior’. Neither of them were old enough to be a senior, even if Hannibal was the eighth of his name.

Now that the pup was here, he didn't look like a Will or a Hannibal anyway. He looked entirely like himself.

“I wonder what color his eyes will be when they settle,” Will mused, stroking a fingertip over the pup’s fair hair.

“It’s likely they’ll darken,” Hannibal said. “Brown eyes are a dominant trait. But I confess, I hope he’ll have your eyes.”

Will gave him a tiny, uncertain glance. Hannibal leaned forward to nuzzle against his jaw and he relaxed.

“Peter,” Will suggested, bringing up one of the names on the list they’d made. Hannibal stared thoughtfully at the baby.

“Peter doesn’t suit him,” he finally said. Will nodded.

“No Spider-man for you,” he said fondly, while Hannibal looked pained. “Edmund?” Will tried.

Hannibal weighed the name against the tiny bundle in Will’s arms. “Edmund,” he murmured.

“Edmund Lecter,” Will said. At this point, he’d so far kept his maiden name (despite his father’s irritation), but Hannibal had lobbied for his last name for the pup, since the Lecters held a noble title.

Hannibal hummed, and turned his head to look at Will properly, giving him the chance to veto if he so chose. But Will was smiling down at their pup, fingers gentle over his delicate pink skin.

“I like it,” Will said finally, looking up at Hannibal.

Edmund came home with Will at the end of the next day, swaddled up and sleepy, and Will immediately took him to their bedroom and laid him in the nest. They’d decided on a family nest until he was old enough to hold his head up, and then they would see. Will wasn’t sure he’d be able to let Edmund out of his sight for long enough to go to the bathroom, let alone to sleep the night, but he’d promised to be open to the idea.

Obviously the pup couldn’t sleep with them forever.

For the first few days home, Will was exhausted still and napped often. He would wake whenever little Edmund fussed, ears tuned to the frequency of his discomfort, but he wasn’t a particularly difficult baby.

He found that Hannibal couldn’t get enough of watching the two of them when Will fed their pup. There was an absolute bone-deep fascination that seemed to come over him when Will settled in to nurse Edmund. He would watch, both the way their pup suckled, and the way Will seemed to fall into a soft daze as he did, as though it were the most extraordinary feeling in the world.

“It’s a bonding experience,” Will explained. “I feel so close to him. I feel like… Like I can keep him safe.”

“I’ll keep you both safe,” Hannibal promised.

The baby grew in steady strides. He watched everything with wide blue eyes that finally settled into Will’s coloring. He had Will’s hair too, dark brown and wild, but everything about his face was Hannibal. Underneath the baby fat, anyway.

“I changed my mind,” Will said, nearly two months later, as they stood in the entryway of Hannibal’s uncle’s house. His arms gripped Edmund, clutching him close. Hannibal had already handed over the diaper bag.

“Just for a night,” Hannibal coaxed. “Or a few hours, if we miss him so strongly. Just some time to ourselves before classes start up again.”

Will’s eyes darted from Hannibal to the door. Hannibal ducked his head, pressing their foreheads together.

“Will,” he breathed, “say the word and we’ll go straight home. You, me, and the pup. But consider it. He will be in excellent care and we can pick him up after dinner, if you aren’t ready for him to stay the night.”

Will swallowed, tucking his head to breathe in the sweet baby smell of their boy, before nodding. He kissed Edmund’s head and handed him to his father, watching the way Hannibal soothed and nuzzled his son. He was fantastic with him. Will had cried more than once watching the two of them interact, seeing how deeply Hannibal had bonded with their pup. He murmured something in a language Will didn’t speak - he was adamant their pup grew up with at least two languages - before passing him to the arms of his aunt, who cooed at and bounced the little thing in her arms. Edmund seemed immediately smitten.

Will felt almost betrayed that he wasn’t upset to be given to someone else.

“We’ll call if there’s anything,” she said, smiling at Will. She had been incredibly kind to him since the first time they’d met, and had proven to be a wealth of knowledge when it came to raising pups. “But there won’t be anything, will there, Edmund?”

Will wondered if his trembling was visible or just inside his ribs.

“We won’t be far,” he said quietly, as though to reassure himself.

Hannibal had to guide him out to the car, a hand on the small of his back, and then had to coax him back out of it once they’d arrived.

“What if he needs us?” Will asked. “What if he gets scared, if he’s upset?”

“We’ve left him plenty of things to scent,” Hannibal reminded him. “You kept his swaddling blanket under your shirt for a few hours.”

“But what if that’s not enough?”

“Then my aunt will call us and we’ll return. We’re only eight minutes away, Will.”

Will continued his fretting as he was guided into the bathroom, as Hannibal filled the tub, as Hannibal stripped him out of his clothes. He only stopped when Hannibal gestured for him to get in.

“You aren’t getting in first?”

Hannibal kissed Will’s jaw. “This is just for you,” he said, his eyes dark. “My beautiful Omega. You worked so hard, gave us such a perfect pup. You deserve a reward. You deserve *worship* .”

Will laughed quietly, trying to press the blush out of his cheeks with the backs of his knuckles. He’d wondered if perhaps once the pup was born Hannibal would return to being cool to him, with a new person to dote on, one that actually carried his genes. But Hannibal had somehow grown even *more* loving, and *more* doting since Edmund had come along.

He seemed to truly enjoy feeding Will from his fingers, making him his favourite meals, getting things for him, tucking him in for a nap with their pup. He seemed to want nothing more than to be of use to *Will,* rather than to make Will prove useful to him.

It was uncanny.

It was very welcome.

“Worship, huh?” He asked, amused, eyes narrowed. He tilted his head up when Hannibal nuzzled him again, with a little more insistence. “Alright, Mr. Lecter, worship me.”

Hannibal bathed him with tender hands, massaging each bit of stiffness from Will’s limbs. He lingered over Will’s feet, when Will’s response to the first touch was a pleased moan. Will sank deeper and deeper into the bathwater, drifting in relaxed bliss.

After, Hannibal dried Will off and then hoisted him into his arms. Will clung to him with a laugh.

“I think you’re meant to carry the Omega over the threshold *before* the baby,” he teased.

“There are many things I owe you,” Hannibal said, nipping lightly at Will’s jaw. “This is just the first.”

Hannibal laid him out among fresh sheets, covering Will, nuzzling at his jaw, his throat.

“Too many clothes,” Will complained, sliding his bare thigh along Hannibal’s clothed one. Hannibal murmured his assent, distracted by kissing a trail down Will’s neck. “Hannibal.”

“Will,” Hannibal rumbled, “I want you to bite me tonight.”

Will shivered, overwhelmed and surprised in equal measure, and caught a hand against Hannibal’s cheek. He held him still so they could look at each other, and furrowed his brows. “Hannibal. You needn’t -”

“I know,” Hannibal told him, turning his face to kiss Will’s palm, eyes never leaving his. “I want to. I want to wear your bite proudly, so others know who I belong to.”

Will whimpered, a small and helpless noise, but he was smiling. Then he laughed. “I thought this wasn’t your aesthetic.”

“That stupid boy has grown up,” Hannibal told him, leaning in to nuzzle Will’s nose with his own. “Will you?”

“Bite you?”

“And claim me,” Hannibal purred, smiling. “And make sure everyone knows.”

They hadn’t had the chance to be intimate properly since Edmund had entered their lives, either he woke up and interrupted their attempts, or both were so tired that they didn’t even try. Now, though, they had all the time in the world and nothing to distract them.

Will drew his knees up around Hannibal and lay back more comfortably on the bed. “I’ll bite you,” he said, nose wrinkling in pleasure. “But you gotta undress first. Show me what I have to work with.”

Hannibal straightened up, kneeling on the bed between Will’s spread thighs. He tugged his sweater off over his head, smiling fondly at the playful whistle Will gave.

“You’ve held up much better than I have,” Will said ruefully. He’d developed a bit of softness around his stomach that stayed even now, more than two months since Edmund had been born. The sides of his belly, his hips, and his thighs all bore stripes from the stretch of his skin. He’d gone back to the way he cared for himself before Edmund, but it seems some markings would be born forever.

Hannibal shimmied out of his pants and then braced himself on all fours over Will, pressing a kiss just beneath his navel. Will shuddered, lips parted on a soft gasp.

“You’re beautiful,” Hannibal assured him.

“Alpha posturing,” Will teased. “You *have* to say that.”

“I don’t,” Hannibal insisted. “And I didn’t, for the longest time. I have months to make up for, Will, and I intend to repay you for each and every minute.”

Will laughed, pressing a hand to his face to stifle the noise. Hannibal nuzzled against his stomach, peering up at him with warm, caring eyes.

This was more than Will had ever thought he’d get. More than he’d ever thought he’d *deserve* . And he wanted it, wanted to clutch it to himself with both hands and never let go.

He reached out to cup Hannibal’s cheek and grinned when he showed his teeth, his purr rumbling low between them as he nuzzled Will’s stomach, opened his mouth to nip at the skin.

“Hey! I’m doing the biting today,” Will reminded him, wrapping his legs around Hannibal’s shoulders and keeping him just where he was, despite his words. Hannibal hummed, drawing his nose in a tickling line up to Will’s navel before kissing there.

“Alright,” he said. “Then what may I do?”

Will pretended to consider, as though his little cock wasn’t already hard from the care Hannibal had taken with him in the bath, from how close they were now. Hannibal was a truly wonderful Alpha, and the fact that he loved Will, and loved Edmund, and that they had their whole lives ahead of them still sometimes overcame Will to the point where he could barely breathe.

“You can lick,” he allowed, arching up against Hannibal and watching him with hooded eyes. “And kiss. And touch me.”

Hannibal rubbed his cheek against Will’s skin, still looking up at him, adoring. “I can do that.”

Hannibal’s fingers were calloused, but they were unfailingly gentle as they skimmed down Will’s sides to clutch at his hips. His lips trailed down to the trimmed thatch of hair at the apex of his thighs, nuzzling close as if to bask in Will’s scent.

Will flushed, shyness never quite held at bay. He turned his head, drawing in a shaky gasp as Hannibal licked a stripe up his cock, suckling at the head.

It never took much to get Will slick and ready, to have him panting for Hannibal. Hannibal’s tongue tormented him, seeking out places that made Will arch his back and jerk in Hannibal’s hold.

Hannibal loved to do this to him, bringing Will to the brink of pleasure, toppling him into sensation until he was a squirming mess, long before he ever slipped inside of him. When Will had grown too big to find a comfortable position for penetration, Hannibal had mastered ways to make him fall apart with just his mouth and his hands.

But today, Will was impatient. “Want you,” he moaned. “Hannibal, please.”

Will caught his hands in Hannibal's hair when he leaned over him and kissed deep, spreading his legs wide for Hannibal to push between. He entered in a deliberate thrust and Will trembled in pleasure.

"God you feel so good," he laughed, biting his lip and letting it go again as Hannibal started to rock lovingly into him.

Hannibal was an incredibly attentive lover, reading Will like a book and adjusting accordingly. It was after Will's third orgasm, with Hannibal's knot swelling, that Will grasped Hannibal's hair and tugged, revealing his throat to seeking teeth.

As Will bit down, Hannibal moaned, orgasm hitting him before he could properly knot his mate. Will hardly cared. He held tight to Hannibal as the Alpha lost himself to pleasure, and

pulled back to start licking the little wound clean.

Hannibal was shaking, barely able to hold himself up over Will, and went gratefully into a heavy sprawl when Will guided him to. Both started to purr, the sound initially quiet before rising in warmth and volume to surround them like a blanket.

Will turned to nuzzle his mate, unable to stop smiling.

"Mine," he told him softly.

"Yours," Hannibal confirmed, kissing the corner of Will's mouth before licking the taste of his own blood from Will's lips.

End Notes

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